

has been documented and preserved for all to see.

"We're very proud of John, what he did, and who he was," says John's mother.

I want her to know that this Senate expresses its deepest gratitude for SSG John E. Cooper's life of service. And we express our deepest gratitude for the Cooper family, for raising a soldier and patriot who answered the call in his country's time of need.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now conduct a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The senior Senator from Montana is recognized.

THE GREATEST GENERATION

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, a few minutes ago, the minority leader urged the Senate to simply pass the House stimulus bill with no amendments, saying it will be a Christmas tree, so pass it with no amendments.

I don't think the Senate wants to deprive 20 million American seniors of a rebate check. I don't think the Senate wants to deprive a quarter of a million disabled veterans of a rebate check. That is what would happen if we were to follow the advice of the minority leader. He would deprive 20 million American senior citizens from getting a rebate check under the stimulus plan. He would deprive a quarter of a million disabled vets from receiving a rebate check under the plan. I don't think the Senate wants to do that.

I think the Senate wants to make some very modest changes to the House-passed bill, if 20 million seniors is modest. We can argue if it is modest. I think it is very important. I think the American public would very much prefer that the Senate make some modest changes to the House-passed bill so those stimulus checks can be sent out very quickly.

We on this side do want speedy passage of the stimulus package. The majority leader has indicated we will take this up on Monday, a few days from today. My hope and expectation is that it will be passed on Monday. Remember, not too long ago, the President and the leadership in Washington, DC, were saying: Gee, let's get those stimulus checks out by February 15. This is January 31. We can get this done very quickly, in a matter of several days, maybe sometime near the end of next week, well before February 15.

We want to move quickly. We want to not load up the stimulus package. Loading it up too much will cause delays, but we on this side of the aisle strongly believe that 20 million seniors should get rebate checks and a quarter of a million veterans get rebate checks.

They will not get those checks under the House-passed bill. That is why I do not think we should willy-nilly accept the House bill which will deprive 20 million seniors and a quarter million disabled veterans of those rebate checks.

They came of age in the Great Depression and during World War II. Of them, Tom Brokaw wrote:

At the end of the twentieth century, the contributions of this generation would be in bold print . . . it is a generation that, by and large, made no demands of homage from those who followed and prospered . . . because of its sacrifices. It is a generation of towering achievement and modest demeanor, a legacy of their formative years, when they were participants and witness to sacrifices of the highest order.

That is what Tom Brokaw wrote in his book "The Greatest Generation." The men and women of that generation and the one that followed are now America's seniors. These are the seniors the Finance Committee is fighting for and trying to help with the economic stimulus bill reported yesterday.

America's seniors are acquainted with sacrifice. As Brokaw wrote:

They know how many of the best of their generation didn't make it to their early twenties, how many brilliant scientists, teachers, spiritual and business leaders, politicians and artists were lost in the ravages of the greatest war the world has seen.

They fought for their country, our American seniors. They gave a lifetime of labor, they gave a lifetime of service, they paid a lifetime of taxes, and they contribute to the economy today. But 20 million of these seniors would not get a check in the House-passed stimulus bill. Twenty million American seniors would get a check in the Finance Committee substitute.

These 20 million seniors would be left out of the House-passed tax rebate. Why? Because they do not have at least \$3,000 in earned income, as in wages, or enough taxable income to meet the test set up by the House bill. In contrast, the Finance Committee plan would allow almost all seniors to receive at least \$500. They would have to show they received at least \$3,000 in Social Security income on their 2007 tax return.

Many American seniors live on fixed incomes. Some earn some wages, some make some money, but many American seniors live only on fixed incomes—their Social Security benefits. Many struggle to pay their medical bills. Many struggle to pay their heating bills, especially as energy costs are going up so high. Drug prices are going up too. Seniors deserve to be included in any rebate program.

When we are contemplating distributing stimulus checks broadly across most American families, it would be wrong not to include 20 million seniors of the greatest generation. A rebate to seniors works for America's economy too. It is not just the right thing to do, but it works for our economy and here is why. Economists agree consumer spending fueled by tax rebates can

boost America's economy, and Americans over age 65 are responsible for 14 percent of all consumer spending. Let me repeat that. Americans over age 65 are responsible for 14 percent of all consumer spending.

Look at this chart to my right. It indicates something very simple, very basic, and very important—and not simply from an economic standpoint but also doing what is morally right for our seniors as well as from an economic perspective. Americans over age 65 spend 92 percent of their income in any given year. That is represented by this horizontal bar on the top in the blue. I will say it again. Americans over age 65—that is what this line represents—spend almost all their income in any given year. They spend 92 percent of their income in any given year.

Now, contrast that with a household headed by a person a little older, over age 75. They spend an even higher percentage of their income—98 percent. That is higher than any other demographic group over the age of 25. Seniors spend the money they receive; much more than any other demographic group over the age of 25.

Other Social Security recipients can benefit too. In 2006, 18 million Americans received Social Security disability benefits, or survivor benefits. Widows, widowers, and disabled veterans—disabled Americans—can qualify for an equal tax rebate, too, under the Finance Committee plan. Millions of them would get nothing under the House plan.

The Finance Committee bill also provides benefits to another group of Americans who have sacrificed for their country: disabled veterans. Once again, the House left them out. The House said no to a quarter of a million disabled veterans. They said no rebate checks if you are a disabled vet and if you don't have significant earned income. Under the House bill, more than a quarter million disabled vets would receive no rebate. Why? Because they have no obligation to file a tax return.

The Finance Committee bill would provide rebate checks for these quarter of a million disabled veterans. The Finance Committee bill would get rebates to disabled veterans receiving at least \$3,000 in nontaxable disability compensation. That is it. The House forgot about that. They forgot about a quarter of a million disabled vets. The Senate plan makes them eligible to earn the same \$500 rebate as wage earners and Social Security recipients—the same. The Department of Veterans Affairs would distribute the rebate.

My colleagues know America is once again at war. Many of my colleagues have visited with wounded soldiers who have come home from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, my colleague from Kentucky a few minutes ago made a very moving tribute to several fallen soldiers from his State of Kentucky. Many of my colleagues have, as

I have, gone to Walter Reed and visited with their wounded warriors. More than 21,000 service men and service women have now been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan—21,000.

Now, thank God, not all of them will become disabled veterans, but many will. No one can question their sacrifice, no one can question their contribution, and no one can question that they have earned the right to participate in this rebate program every bit as much as any other American. So let us honor the Americans who came of age in the Great Depression and during World War II. Let us honor the Americans who have fought for our country in its wars only to come home disabled. And let us ensure that these greatest Americans receive their fair share of any economic stimulus.

That is what is at stake. That is why the Senate should not rubberstamp the House-passed bill. That is why the Senate should pass the Finance Committee's stimulus bill. To do anything less would be to shortchange millions of seniors and veterans who have earned the right to be called the greatest Americans.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is authorized to speak for up to 10 minutes if he wishes.

HONORING MARTIN PAONE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today is January 31. It is signifying the end to many things: the end of the month, maybe we will begin to see a little bit of spring down the road, but it is also the end of an amazing career of someone we all know and love, and that is Marty Paone.

Marty Paone has worked for 32 years on the Hill, 28 years on the Senate floor. He started in the House Post Office before working in Senate parking. He joined the cloakroom in 1979 and was appointed Democratic Secretary in 1995 by Senator Daschle. He worked under four Democratic leaders: Senator BYRD, Senator Mitchell, Senator Daschle, and Senator REID. I think every one of them would agree with the word that I would use to describe Marty Paone—"indispensable."

We do not know what we are going to do without Marty here. He has been such an amazing presence, so knowledgeable; not only about the rules of the floor but just about how this body works. I know Senator REID relied on

him for just about every kind of advice. Again, his advice was indispensable.

I am particularly appreciative of his kindness to me when I was a new Senator, teaching me the way the place worked, helping me realize when there would be votes so I could time my schedule. As most of you know, I like to be busy, but I hate to miss votes, as everybody else. And he was just the most knowledgeable, decent, kind, indispensable person around here.

Now Marty is leaving. We really are going to miss him. We are going to miss his dedication to this institution. I think if you made a list of the people most dedicated to the Senate, Marty Paone would be in the top 10 or 20 in all our history.

We are going to miss his ever-present—he hovered in the background quietly—omniscience, always knowing what was going on, and always being there to help. We are going to miss Marty just as a person who, in his quiet, droll way, is actually a very funny guy.

I want to wish Marty the best. I think I speak on behalf of 100 Senators and everyone who served previously. I thank his wife Ruby for putting up with the long hours. I know because I would call Marty at home on weekends much of the time asking him for advice or when there might be a vote or this or that. His three kids, Alex, Stephanie, and Tommy—Stephanie is at William & Mary, Alex goes to VCU, and Tommy is still in high school. And a particular hello, because I have heard she is watching, to Marty's mother Evelyn Paone.

Mrs. Paone, God gave you 95 years, and let's hope he gives you many more. I know you are so proud of Marty, maybe even a little prouder than we all are.

Marty, we will miss you, we thank you, we love you. Good luck, Godspeed.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ENSIGN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COLONEL D'ARCY GRISIER

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise today with a truly heavy heart. At Arlington Cemetery, on January 17, 2008, I attended the funeral services of my friend, COL D'Arcy Grisier. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife beloved Roberta, or, as we call her, Bert, and their three children Sean, Kelly, and Darcy.

D, as he was called by his friends, was a caring father, loving husband, and a member of my extended family. A patriot in every sense of the word, D spent 26 years serving this Nation in the U.S. Marine Corps. Upon retiring

from the Corps in 2003, D decided to continue serving this country in a different capacity.

From 2003 until September of this past year, Colonel D was my military legislative assistant. In this capacity D advised me on all national security matters, all the while reminding me that once a Marine always a Marine and that the "M" in Marine is always capitalized.

Those of us who were friends with D will remember him more for who he was than the lifetime of service he gave to this country. My staff and I will miss D always knowing exactly what the Redskins were doing wrong.

We will miss him always saying "keep your seats" whenever he entered a room. We will miss him constantly singing Jimmy Buffet songs out loud, and losing at least two sleeves of golf balls every time he played. We will miss his laughter and his camaraderie. Most of all, we will miss his friendship.

Mr. President, if D Grisier knew that I was making this statement about him, he would probably be upset. That was the type of individual he was.

While he would not have wanted this attention, Americans deserve to know D's story and the caliber of person who spent a lifetime serving them.

This past summer at our annual staff retreat Colonel D announced that he would be leaving the office to go and work in the Pentagon as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Budget and Appropriations. This was bitter-sweet for many of us.

We were thrilled for D, of course, but sad to see him go. Unfortunately, he was never able to report to work for his new job, a challenging position that he looked forward to starting.

During his tenure on Capitol Hill he had many accomplishments, which D referred to as "doing the people's business."

These accomplishments included advising me in my role as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support.

In this capacity, he drafted legislation and amendments, wrote numerous floor statements, staffed me in high level meetings, advised me on billion-dollar spending bills, and, on occasion, voted my proxy, or what D would refer to his role as, the "extremely junior Senator from Nevada."

He spent a great deal of time in Nevada at our military bases and meeting with veterans. D also took great care in helping the families of our State's fallen heroes. He moved mountains in order to relieve some of the stress and anxiety they face at such difficult times.

After D announced to the office that he would be leaving for the Pentagon he told a short story. I believe this story reflects the type of individual that he truly was.

D told us that the professional accomplishment he was most proud of was bringing a Junior ROTC program to Douglas High School.